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ABSTRACT

This glossary of child abuse terms is designed to facilitate clarity and understanding about child abuse. It is the objective of this glossary to provide material that will be valuable to those in the helping professions who are confused by conflicting terminology. The list of terms contained in this glossary consists of items found to be most beneficial to graduate students and professional conference participants. Approximately 150 terms are defined. Terms range from terms used with children such as "bad touch," to terms used with police such as "chickenhawk," to terms used with the judicial system such as "best interest of the child," to terms used by counseling professionals such as "apathy-futility syndrome." (ABL)

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CHILD ABUSE: A GLOSSARY FOR COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

This glossary is designed to facilitate clarity and understanding about child abuse. The growth in the number of problems related to child abuse has been so rapid that some members of the helping profession, such as counselors and teachers, have indicated that confusion in terminology and understanding exists. For many, this causes frustration, which, in many instances, hinders communication among professionals. The reader, hopefully, will be able to understand the concepts found in the literature, as well as, discuss the subject of child abuse more intelligently following the utilization of this glossary. For a number of persons in the helping profession, confusion occurs because of conflicting terminology with the language connected with concerning child abuse. It is the objective of this glossary to provide material that will be valuable to those who fall into this category.

The list of terms contained in this glossary consists of items found to be most beneficial to graduate students and professional conference participants. The graduate students were individuals who completed coursework in the following two courses: "The Counselor and the Abused Child, and the Workshop: The Teacher and Child Abuse." Additional information was solicited from professional conference and workshop participants who were employed in an area related to child abuse.

While this glossary contains terms and concepts whose general use and understanding are essential for those individuals who work in the field, the precise meanings for a number of the items may be difficult for the general counseling population to discern. Definitions of all terms, however, were determined in part by the following procedures:

1. A compilation of concepts were given to participants and they were invited to react and provide feedback.
2. A revised list was compiled and a number of terms were either added, discarded or modified.

Whereas counselors and classroom teachers may be able to identify the signs of child abuse and give basic information to , youth, it is also important that a common core of terms be utilized in working with professionals in the field of child abuse. This glossary is an attempt to enhance communication between members of the helping profession who work with child abuse cases and those who serve in an educational capacity.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR CHILD ABUSE

Abandonment: leaving a child totally alone. . . parents fail to return. . . child is found wandering the streets. . . child is left outdoors for someone to find and care for.

Abuse: infliction of bodily harm or serious injury (physical, sexual, emotional or mental) upon a child by parents or caretaker.

Abused Parent: parent who has been abused as a child and who, therefore, may be more likely to abuse his/her own child.

Abuser: anyone (parent, friend, neighbor, relative or stranger) who inflicts emotional, mental or physical harm upon the body of a child by other than accidental means; a person who is responsible for a child's welfare and neglects the child.

Abusive Parent: a person who has neglected his/her role as caretaker of a child; someone who mistreats his/her child; someone with low or no self-esteem; someone who may have been abused as a child; someone who may have been rejected, neglected or deprived as a child; someone with inappropriate or unrealistic goals and expectations for his/her child; someone who may really love his/her child but acts inappropriately with or toward the child when life situations become unbearable.

Accidental/Unknowing Abuser: individuals who are abusive by exercising poor caretaker judgment, such as permitting a child to play with dangerous objects (such as a pistol). In this category, we sometimes find the mentally retarded caretaker, the senile grandparent, etc. Treatment is dependent almost entirely upon the capability of the caretaker with whom one is working.

Adolescent Pedophile: an adolescent who is childish, immature and sexually underdeveloped and who likes to get involved physically with children.

Aggression: behavior that aims/intends to inflict injury or pain upon others; a coercive use of power to manipulate or harm oneself or others; or defending oneself against undue pressure, harm, or coercion.

Anomie: breakdown or failure of standards, rules, norms and values that ordinarily bind people together in some socially organized way. Families of abused or neglected children are often in a state of anomie, which is characterized by attitudes of aimlessness, futility, and lack of motivation to change.

Apathy-Futility Syndrome: immature personality type which is often associated with child neglect and characterized by an inability to feel and find any significant meaning in life. This syndrome, often arising from early deprivations in childhood, is frequently perpetuated from generation to generation within a family system.

At-Risk: A term used when there is a greater likelihood that some danger or something negative will happen. In the case of child abuse, at-risk children could include those who have a difficult temperament, have handicaps, those whose parents are under a lot of stress, or children of parents who themselves have been abused.

Bad Touch: a touch, such as hitting, slapping, kicking, punching, biting, or pulling hair, that causes one to feel bad.

Battered Child Syndrome: term which was coined by physicians who recognized numbers of children as having similar injuries and histories. There are several elements that are the criteria for the "Battered Child Syndrome" as defined in the California case of People vs. Jackson, 1970.

Battery: an act of physical violence or an offensive contact with a person without his/her consent and may or may not be preceded by a threat of assault. Minors cannot legally give consent, and, therefore, any act of violence or any such contact is considered battery. These actions may be of an intentional or non-intentional nature.

Beat(ing): to strike against directly, forcefully, and repeatedly with intent to inflict pain.

Behavioral Indicators of Neglect: the behaviors such as the following: child is or may be constantly hungry, begs for food, is rejected by other children because of offensive body odor, constantly falls asleep in class, and/or constantly arrives at school early and leaves late.

Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse: the behaviors such as the following: the child shows evidence of bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge, delinquency, poor peer relationships and seductive behavior.

Benign Neglect: a term applied to children who have never been beaten, burned or physically tortured but merely ignored by busy, non-caring parents who provide all the prerequisites of the good life but deny their offspring the most important and vital ingredients: love and personal attention.

Best Interest of the Child: standard term for deciding among alternative plans for abused or neglected children. This is related to the "Least Detrimental Alternative Principle."

Bibliotherapy: a tool for helping disturbed children. Children who have been abused can, by reading special books, learn to think in a more positive and constructive manner and can realize that there are usually a number of directions they can select when confronted with a problem. By identifying with characters in a book they can understand that they are not the only ones that have this problem and that solutions are possible. Teachers, librarians and school counselors can all use bibliotherapy to aid a child who is in need.

Burden of Proof: the duty, usually falling on the state as petitioner, of proving allegations against a parent in a trial. It is up to the state to prove the case; neither the child nor the parents have the duty to explain unproven allegations.

Caretaker: a person responsible for a child's health or welfare, including the child's parent, guardian, or other person within the child's own home; or a person responsible for a child's health or welfare in a relative's home, foster care home, or residential institution. A caretaker is responsible for meeting a child's basic physical and psychological needs and for providing protection and supervision.

Chickenhawk: a term used by law enforcement personnel, child pornographers, and offenders themselves to describe the pedophile whose sexual preference is limited to boys.

Child Abuse: a term defined by Indiana statutes as the physical abuse of children under the age of eighteen and this includes any nonaccidental injury caused by a child's caretaker. A more widely recognized definition, however, states that it is any physical, mental, emotional, or sexual treatment or neglect of a person under the age of eighteen. Intent is not excused by the law.

Child Molestor: person, who with child under 12 years of age, performs sexual intercourse or deviate sexual conduct; person who submits to any fondling or touching with the intent to arouse or to satisfy sexual desires.

Child Pornography: any photographs, movies, videos, etc. which depict children engaging in sexual acts with adults, other children or animals. This also includes photographing nude or sexually posed children for the purpose of sexual arousal. Lastly, there are films which show the killing of children; these films are known as "snuff films."

Child Prostitution: a situation involving children in sexual acts for profit and generally with frequently changing partners. The children may be acting on their own. Parents or other adults, however, usually manage the activities and receive the profits.

Child Protection Service: a department that each County Department of Public Welfare shall establish within itself as a local child protection service. The service shall have sufficient, qualified and trained staff to maximize the continuity of responsibility, care and service of individual caseworkers toward individual children and families.

Child/Sexual Exploitation: an act or acts performed by a person who intentionally manages, produces, sponsors, and/or films videotapes of sexual performance by child under 16.

Child Solicitation: a person eighteen (18) years of age or older who knowingly or intentionally solicits a child to engage in sexual intercourse, deviate sexual conduct or any fondling or touching intended to arouse or satisfy the sexual desires of either the child or the older person.

Civil Abuse: generally a crime involving people, not a crime against the state. In abuse cases, the abuse is by a family member or caregiver, not someone unknown to the victim.

Cold, Compulsive Disciplinarian Parent: a parent for whom abuse is a reaction to the child's need for closeness and affection and interest in the body and sex.
Parents have compulsively clean homes. They defend their rights to punish their children.

Commission (as it relates to the definition of child abuse): acts inflicted upon a child that result in such injuries as bruises, burns, and broken bones.

Compliance: the behavior of children who readily yield to demands in an attempt to please abusive or neglectful parents or caretakers.

Confusing Touch: In discussion, children define a "confusing touch" as one that makes them feel funny inside; when it feels like something is wrong, you're right.

Consortium: an integrative, cooperative interagency network that provides services to abused and neglected children, adolescents, and their families.

Crisis Intervention: action to relieve a specific stressful situation or series of problems which are immediately threatening to a child's health and/or welfare. This involves alleviation of parental stress through provision of emergency services in the home and/or removal of the child from the home.

Damaged Goods: the concept that children retain of themselves after they have been abused. They believe they have been permanently damaged; they believe they cannot recover; they believe they are damaged in the eyes of "society."

Defense Mechanism: behavior used to cope with unhappiness or unpleasant situations. An example would be regression (reverting to infantile behavior such as baby-talk, bed-wetting, crying excessively or thumbsucking).

Depreciation: the discounting of child's achievements, the accusing of a child of consistent failure, the blowing of misbehavior out of proportion, or any such act to degrade a child's self-esteem.

Depressive/Passive-Aggressive Parents: Abuse represents anger and resentment at having to meet the needs of others and an inability to meet the role expectations of a caretaker. Often only one child who is seen as a competitor or a burden to the dependent parent is abused.

Deprived: a type of child abuse by a parent or caretaker in which something important has been taken away or the child is kept from acquiring something such as proper education, proper nutrition, and sufficient love.

Disciplinary Abuse: a type of abuse in which parents--often upstanding citizens-- are rigid, controlled, and unfeeling; defend their right to

discipline their child (usually an adolescent) for failing to comply with expectations.

Disclosure: a way of letting it be known that a person has been abused such as private, by direct or indirect hints, by disguised by disclosure, or disclosure with strings.

Dissociation: a split in the conscious process in which a group of mental activities break away from the main stream of consciousness and function as a separate unit, as if belonging to another person. Often the abuse victim dissociates himself/herself from his/her body during the abuse to pretend the abuse is not happening to them.

Distancing: not being available to comfort a child emotionally when he/she is frightened or sad; ignoring a child's needs and refusing to acknowledge his successes.

Duty to Photograph: a duty required of medical practitioners and others to report cases of known or suspected child abuse. Photographs are taken of the areas of trauma visible on the child who is the subject of the report of abuse.

Early Intervention: programs and services focusing on prevention by relieving family stress before child abuse and neglect occurs--for example, help lines, Head Start, home health visitors and crisis nurseries.

Ecchymoses: a medical term to describe injuries which are caused from physical abuse; the injury may range from "bruises" to "head traumas."

Educational Neglect: a type of neglect in which there is commonly chronic truancy which the parents make no attempt to correct (i.e., failure to enroll school age children, causing them to be absent one month or more, or refusal of recommended remedial service without good reason).

Emergency Services: The focus of these services of a community in which the focus is protection of a child and prevention of further maltreatment through availability of a reporting mechanism on a 24-hour basis and immediate intervention.

Emotional Abuse: any damage or harm done to the mental or emotional state of a child-blaming, belittling, rejecting, showing inequality within the family, name calling, yelling, etc.; a child who is emotionally abused may be shy, appear to be a slow learner, never protest, avoid others, etc. . .

Emotional Dwarfism: a new syndrome of child abuse that has been uncovered and speaks for those who suffer in silence. The child simply stops growing, begins acting strange, and/or exhibits bizarre eating, drinking, sleeping and social behavior. The child will drop in intellectual growth.

Emotional Maltreatment: maltreatment that includes blaming, belittling, or rejecting a child; constantly treating siblings unequally; and persistent lack of concern by the caretaker of child.

Emotional Neglect: an act or omission on the part of the parents. Emotional nourishment such as touching, cuddling or long conversations is lacking, and, therefore, proper emotional and intellectual development of the child does not occur.

Episodic: an incident or series of related events (physical abuse) in the course of a continuous experience; an act of abuse which is seen more than once in a relatively short period of time due to a specific situation.

Exhibitionism: a word in child abuse, that can refer to an adult who has a tendency to display one's personal qualities to attract attention or who gains sexual gratification by exposure to a child. It could also mean that an adult requires a child to expose his or her sexual organs.

Failure to Thrive Syndrome (FTT): a serious medical condition most often seen in children under one year of age. An FTT child's weight, height, and motor development fall significantly short of average growth.

Family Dysfunction: ineffective functioning of a family as a unit or of one member in his family role; sometimes caused by physical, mental or emotional problems. Child abuse and neglect are often signs of family dysfunction.

Family Violence: abusive or aggressive behavior between parents, known as wife battery or spouse abuse; between children, known as sibling abuse; and/or between parents and children within a family, usually child abuse. This behavior is related to factors within the structure of a family system and/or society (for example: poverty, models of violent behavior displayed via mass media, stress due to excessive numbers of children, values of dominance and submissiveness, and attitudes toward discipline and punishment). It may also occur as a result of alcoholism or other substance abuse.

Fixated Pedophile: usually a man who is oriented toward male children and who has not progressed in his sexual development with his adult peers but zeros in on male boys aged 7, 8, or 9. His acts are usually well planned and are compulsive rather than impulsive.

Frustration: prevention in accomplishing a purpose or fulfilling a desire; thwarting; to cause feelings of discouragement or bafflement. This is also a feeling that abused children and abusers both experience.

Good Touch/Bad Touch: a concept used in teaching young children about sexual abuse. A bad touch is a touch which gives the child the "ah oh" feeling and makes the child think something is wrong. A bad touch is one which is sexually abusive such as fondling, fellatio, etc. Good touches are the loving, caring/cuddles and hugs by people who love the child and are nonabusive.

High Risk Children: children who may unwittingly invite various kinds of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual) because they were born prematurely, or retarded or mentally handicapped, or were born with physical defects or deformities, or are babies who are stiff and hard to hold, or were part of a multiple birth.

Hospital Hold: hospitalization for further observation and protection of a child suspected of being abused or neglected.

Hypernatremic Dehydration: periodic water deprivation by a psychotic mother. It has been reported and may be classified as child abuse.

Immunity: extension from criminal prosecution and freedom from natural or usual liability, when making a report that a child may be a victim of abuse. A legal protection is granted, so long as that person acted in good faith.

Incest: sexual intercourse between close relatives. In child abuse this would refer to the practice of sexual intercourse between a parent (or caretakers) and his/her child.

Incestuous Assault: refers to any manual, oral or genital sexual contact or other explicit sexual behavior that an adult family member imposes on a child who is unable to alter or understand the adult's behavior due to his/her powerlessness in the family.

Incestuous Family: a family that engages in sexual intercourse interchangeably between children, siblings, and parents or caretakers.

Indiana Public Law 276, Chapter 11: a chapter of state law that states that all individuals who suspect child abuse are required to immediately report it to a local child protection agency or law enforcement agency. It also details who is granted immunity from civil or criminal liability.

Indiscriminate Friendliness: a term that refers to children who seek affection and other gratification from any adult, even strangers, and yet remain superficial in all relationships.

Institution Abuse: a term used to refer to abuse of children in day care centers, in private and public child caring and child placing institutions, and in elementary schools which is not an uncommon type of abuse. It is also completely unnecessary. Focus of the treatment effort is rarely if ever directed to the individual abuser but should be directed to the administration and policy structure of the institution. Redress of institutional abuse and "treatment" must often be sought through legal prosecution and non-renewal of licensing.

Intake Counselor: the welfare worker responsible for receiving the call reporting child abuse. His/Her responsibility is to field calls and get enough information so someone can get to the victim as rapidly as possible.

Intentional Drugging: a situation in which a parent or caretaker gives drugs to a child in order to keep a child in a quiet, sedated manner so the parents may do what they want.

Interactive Abuse: a thought by scientists that abuse is a result of a combination of internal and external social factors.

Intervention: action taken by family, friends, schools, law enforcement or protective services to confront the abusive situation and seek help for the abuser, the victims, and the family.

Isolation: a situation in which victims feel alone and have nowhere to go. Continued abuse can lead to greater isolation and a feeling of being trapped.

Language-Delayed Children: children with absent, minimal or impaired speech and language. Many of these children are of normal intelligence. Although abuse and neglect are certainly suspect, the cause of delay is conjectural at best.

Legal Immunity: freedom from civil or criminal liability for reporting suspicion of child abuse in good faith and without malicious intent.

Liability for Failure to Report: state laws require certain categories of persons to report actual and/or suspected cases of child abuse and neglect (failure to report is enforced by a penalty, fine or imprisonment.

Life Crisis: prolonged series of changes that predispose a parent to abuse a child.

The Lolita Syndrome a term used to refer to pseudomature behavior in children who have been molested.

Maltreatment Child Syndrome: the presentation to maltreated child who often presents himself/herself without obvious signs of being battered but with the multiple minor physical evidences of emotional neglect and abuse, as well as at times of nutritional deprivation.

Mandated Agency: agency designated by state statutes as legally responsible for receiving and investigating reports of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Mandated Reporters: Professionals who have extensive contact with children, and are, therefore, responsible by law for protecting children by reporting suspicions of child abuse. These professionals include doctors, nurses, dentists, social workers, day care workers, juvenile officers and police.

Maternal Deprivation Syndrome: a condition which is seen most often in infants and in which slowed growth occurs as a result of a lack of physical and emotional stimulation.

Medical Neglect: failure to seek medical or dental treatment for a health problem or condition which, if untreated, could become severe enough to represent a danger to the child.

Medical Practitioner: a phrase referring to a licensed physician, intern, resident, osteopath, chiropractor, dentist, podiatrist, registered nurse, other licensed nurse, or mental health professional, all of whom are bound by Indiana law to photograph physical areas of trauma on a child when abuse is suspected.

Mental Injury: injury to the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child as evidenced by observable and substantial impairment in his/her ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior with due regard to his/her culture. It is a form of child abuse or neglect.

Minimum Sufficient Level of Care: the lowest level of care the legal requirement for removing a child from a home to protect from abuse.

Molestation of children: a term used to include touching, fondling or kissing, especially in the breast or genital areas, or engaging in masturbation of the child or urging the child to fondle or masturbate the adult. It is a vague term as its limits are not defined.

Moral Neglect: failure to give a child adequate guidance in developing positive social values such as parents who allow their children (or teach them) to steal.

Mosaic Laws: seventeenth century laws in early America that permitted the killing of unruly children.

Multi-Disciplinary Team: a community approach to child abuse and neglect. This approach uses special skills and knowledge of various professionals so the needs of families and the community are met. The team members meet together regularly to assess cases of child abuse and neglect and to recommend appropriate treatment.

Needs Assessment: a formal or informal evaluation of what services are needed by abused and neglected children and their families within a specified geographical area or within another given population.

Neglect of children: deprivation of minimally accepted standards of food, shelter, medical attention, clothing or other care, or proper guardianship or abandonment.

Neglectful Abuser: Neglect becomes routine aid the life of the child is endangered through a continuation of the neglectful patterns. An unbalanced diet of french fries, soft drinks, and candy for a school age child is neglectful but is not abusive. Failure to feed a child at all is neglectful.

Neglectful abuse is usually the result of ignorance, poverty, and other social ailments. Sadly, abusers in this category are not too well motivated and are difficult people with which to work in changing behaviors. Because of dependency needs, this type of abuser also "abuses" homemaker services, public health nurses, and Department of Public Welfare workers.

Usually casework failure is associated with "expecting too much too soon." Goals must be minimal, manageable, sequential, and integrated. It is unrealistic to expect an abuser in this category to provide meals three times a day with offerings from basic food groups. Not only can they not afford this financially but also many cannot fathom the concept of eating three meals a day and some cannot see the rationale behind preparing meals for others, including their children.

Nutrition Deprivation: a term used to describe a child who is malnourished because of deliberate underfeeding by his parents or caretaker.

Omission (as it relates to the definition of child abuse): a term which refers to the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter; also, a failure to provide for a child's educational, health, and emotional needs; and the failure to provide supervision; abandonment is also included.

Oral Report: A report which points out that a child may be a victim of child abuse or neglect and which is sent immediately to a local protective service or law enforcement agency.

Parens Patriae: "The Power of the Sovereign" - refers to the state's power to act for or on the behalf of a person who cannot act in his/her own behalf (includes minors, incompetents, and some developmentally disabled).

Parents United: the largest U.S. treatment program for incest victims and their families.

Passive Abuser: an abuser who never actually lays a hand on the child but is just as involved in the abuse as if he or she had personally inflicted it. The passive abuser paves the way for abuse; he or she sets it up and/or allows it to occur. There is no such thing as a family in which one parent abuses and the other parent is completely uninvolved or ignorant of it.
The feelings of the passive abuser may be submerged but they are not intense; they are simply released through other people because of inability to express feelings.

Pederasty: sexual relationships between mature men and young boys which were common in Greek history. This practice served as a means to rearing boys to become Greek soldiers in accord with government specifications. This was the prime way a boy received his education. Once a boy matured, custom demanded that the lovers part and the mature young man was expected to pursue women and other young boys.

Pedophiles: Persons who use children as their sexual objects. About 90% of pedophiles are men. They have feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, isolation, depression, and anxiety. They are immature and usually passive men. They are usually interested on in prepubescent girls because they are not threatened by them. They seldom have a successful relationship with an adult woman.

Perpetrator: a person who purposes to commit a crime. A child perpetrator is an adult who takes advantage of a child emotionally, physically or sexually.

Pervasively Angry and Abusive Parent: parent who display impulsive and unfettered expression of general rage and hostility which may be part of a parent's background. Most often the mother is the abuser and the father does not live in the house.

Physical Abuse: physical trauma inflicted by a parent or caretaker. This is not necessarily intended, as many injuries to children are never intended but are abusive.

Physical Consequence of Abuse: consequences which may include damage to a child's vital organs such as the brain, ears, and eyes or injury to the mouth area, hands, arms, feet, legs, and genitals. Such injuries may result in mental retardation, deafness, blindness, speech problems, and fine and gross motor problems (or damage).

Physical Indicators of Neglect: physical evidence such as constant fatigue or listlessness, unattended physical problems, consistent hunger, poor hygiene, or abandonment.

Physical Indicators of Sexual Abuse: physical evidence such as difficulty in walking or sitting; torn, strained, or bloody underclothes; pain or itching in genital area; semen around the genitals or on clothing, venereal disease (especially in young children); and pregnancy.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): a disorder which may include the following symptoms: flashbacks to the traumatic events, recurrent dreams about the trauma, a feeling of estrangement from others, and a general sense of numbness. PTSD is seen in war veterans, abuse victims, and others who have experienced a severe trauma.

Primary Prevention: providing programs and assistance to families so that child abuse and neglect are less likely to occur.

Secondary Prevention: intervention at the early signs of abuse and neglect; treatment of the problems causing abuse; preventing further problems and incidences of abuse and neglect.

Tertiary Prevention: Treatment given after child abuse and neglect have been confirmed.

Preventive Measures: measures which involve both the management of previous or 'high risk' abuse cases and also societal changes aimed at reducing the levels of those background factors such as low parenting skills and general attitude towards the physical treatment of children which provide a context in which abuse can too easily result.

Probable Cause: legal standard indicating a reasonable ground for belief in the existence of facts supporting a complaint (or report of abuse).

Probation: time out of jail for offenders who have been proven guilty. Most molesters receive probation for the first offense and are required to get psychological help.

Promiscuity: indiscriminate sexual relations - a sign of child sexual abuse. The child will have sexual experiences with a great many individuals as a reaction to his/her own abuse.

Psychological/Emotional Abuse: child abuse which results in impaired psychological growth and development; frequently occurs as verbal abuse or excessive demands on a child's performance and results in a negative self-image on the part of the child and disturbed child behavior; may occur with or without physical abuse.

Public Law 135: The Child Protection Law, passed in 1973, which specifically defined child abuse, provided money for state and private agencies, created a National Center for research, and mandated reporting of child abuse with protection from lawsuits for those who reported in good faith.

Public Law 276: the state law which requires that suspicions of child abuse must be reported. This is the law which provides Protective Child Services with receiving reports and investigating child abuse.

Reason to Believe: A legal term that means evidence which, if presented to individuals of similar background and training, would cause those individuals to believe that a child was abused or neglected.

Recidivism: a term used when previous child abusers commit another offense after they have passed through the legal and counseling system.

Regressed Molester: Regressed molesters may lead normal married lives for years; their sexual involvement with children may be triggered by sudden stress such as "mid-life crisis."

Repressed Anger: anger that is usually held back by the abused person. Most often this repressed anger is toward the abuser's partner.

Reporting in Good Faith: a phrase in Indiana statute IC31-6-11-7 concerning civil and criminal immunity for those who report suspected abuse. Those who report abuse for malicious reasons are not protected by immunity, while those who "report in good faith" or out of honest concern for the child's welfare are protected by law by immunity.

Role Reversal: a child abuse form in which the parents expect from their child the stimulation and love which ordinarily the parents should provide for the child. The roles are, then, reversed and then the parents get angry with their children for not adequately stimulating and nurturing them.

SCAN TEAM: Suspect Child Abuse and Neglect team which has, as its objective, the assessment of a child and his/her family to determine if abuse and/or neglect has occurred and what treatment is indicated. The team usually includes a pediatrician, a social worker, and a psychiatrist or psychologist, but other professionals are often involved. Scan teams or units generally are located in hospitals or outpatient facilities.

Secondary Violence: violence that begins with a physical force on the child by one parent. The other parent views the violence as illegitimate. This may in turn set off a conflict between partners that may lead to conjugal violence.

Self-identified Abuser: Caretakers in this classification feel they are abusive and, in fact, using the five criteria listed, may or may not be abusive. They do need treatment, are motivated, and change rapidly. Parents Anonymous is an excellent referral source.

Senesent: term used for a situation when an older adult who is lonely and socially isolated engages in some sexual activity with a child.

Sexual Exploitation: the use of a child by an adult, in turn, sexual abuse.

Shaken Child Syndrome: a situation in which a child is shaken violently by the upper arms and shoulders. It ruptures blood vessels in the brain and can lead to coma or death.

Situational Abuser: A combination of circumstances and events, which may result in abuse such as the following: a parent being absent from the home, a new stepparent attempting to assume the role of father or mother, three pre-school children in diapers. Situational abusers are fairly easy to treat through resolution or removal of the stress-provoking factors.

This type of abuser is often confused with the Frustrated-Displaced Abuser but is quite different. With relief of situational stress, abuse will cease in one category but will persist if displacement is a psychological mechanism of choice. In common sense terms, the situational abuser often feels guilty over his/her behavior towards children and the frustrated-displaced abuser does not.

SLAM (Societies League Against Molestation): an organization to help fight child abuse and particularly child molestation. It was founded by Patti Linebaugh, professor at LaVerne College of Law.

Social Isolation: the limited interaction and contact of many abusive and/or neglectful parents with relatives, neighbors, friends, or community resources.

Social Learning Model: a theory of the explanation of child abuse that states the parents did not learn the necessary social skills such as communication, tolerance, nurturing, etc. which are necessary to rear a child properly.

Social Psychological Model: a theory of the explanation of child abuse emphasizing that environmental variables encourage abuse (variables such as lack of emotional support, too many children, social class differences).

Socially and Parentally Incompetent: a type of abuser who, upon supportive and warm questioning, usually reveals a pattern of being abused as a child and is simply perpetuating his/her own child rearing practices.

Persons in this category usually believe that they are "right" in the disciplinary measures used. They respond well, however, to alternatives to violence in child rearing, particularly in group settings.

Sodomy: the sexual abuser's penetration through the anus. Another definition is to force a child to have sex with an animal.

Special Child: a child who is abused, neglected or at risk of abuse or neglect because he/she has a special problem with which the parent(s) have difficulty coping or because the child has some psychologically negative meaning for the parent(s); also referred to as "target child."

Statutory Rape: sexual intercourse with a child of either sex including fellatio, sodomy or penile-vaginal intercourse. It may occur without physical violence through seduction, persuasion, bribes, use of authority or other threats.

Stress Factors: environmental or psychological pressures over a prolonged period of time which may be a cause of child abuse or neglect. Environmental stress may include unemployment, poverty, poor and overcrowded housing, competition for success, and other such problems. Psychological stress can include marital problems, unwanted pregnancy, role confusion, and unresolved problems from childhood.

Sub-cultural Abuser: a term used to refer either to those who abuse children on religious grounds (from Biblical injunctions which are misinterpreted) and to those who subscribe to the "Subculture of Violence," so named by Wolfgang. This latter type perceives violence as a desirable norm in interpersonal problem resolution. Both are extremely difficult to treat.

Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect: reason to believe that child abuse or neglect is occurring. Anyone should report suspected abuse in good faith. Members of certain professions are mandated to report suspected abuse and neglect. Failure to report to the proper authorities is punishable by fines or imprisonment.

Temporary Placement: voluntary or involuntary short term removal of a child from his/her own home, primarily when a child's safety or well-being is threatened, endangered, or when a family crisis can be averted by such action.

Termination of Rights: the legal severing of ties between the parent(s) and an abused child. Usually the child has been abused over a long period of time and the authorities are removing the child permanently from the parent(s).

Transgenerational Child Abuse: the concept that an abused child grows up to be a child abuser him/herself more frequently than a person who was not abused as a child.
This phenomena is referred to as transgenerational child abuse. An abused child who lacks nurturing and the proper role models in his/her life grows up without the necessary skills to be a nonabusive parent. This, however, does not mean that someone who is abused has to become abusive. According to recent research, transgenerational child abuse (abuse which spans the generations) is not as common as earlier statistics had indicated.

Unfounded Report: any report of suspected child abuse or neglect made to the mandated agency for which it is determined that there is no probable cause to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred.

Verbal Abuse: the use of words as weapons. It occurs when an adult makes remarks to a child that are destructive to the child's self-image (messages that tell a child he is lousy, no good, and/or worthless).
Verbally abused children have difficulty recognizing that they have worth, that they are valuable, or good, or lovable.

Verification of Child Abuse and Neglect: substantiation of child abuse or neglect following investigation of suspected cases by mandated agency workers and/or assessment by a diagnostic team.

Victim Precipitated Abuse: the precipitation by a few children of violent acts in others. This is a learned behavior in the child and the violent act of the adult is usually equated with love by the child. Often, these children will be described as "whiny" by several independent persons. Treatment is focused upon the child and is a long, difficult process. The parents must also receive treatment to change parenting patterns and behaviors.

Violent Personal Crime: reference to criminal acts resulting from differences in personal relations in which death or physical injury is inflicted. Violent personal crime is a reflection of individual and personal violence and includes specific forms of criminal homicide, forcible rape, and child abuse.

Withdrawn Child: a child who seeks to avoid social contacts and receives relatively few of his gratifications from activities involving other people; a child who gives little overt expression to his thoughts and who find more satisfaction in fantasy and contemplation.

World of Abnormal Rearing (WAR): a generational cycle of development in which abused or neglected children tend to grow up to be abusive or neglectful parents unless intervention occurs to break the cycle.